

ServiceWorld Changes Name After TSI Merger

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Reporter

Monday, September 16, 2013

With a massive tourist destination project in Foley, Ala., in the works, ServiceWorld Computer Center owner and founder Doug Pitt has merged his computer-services company with St. Charles-based information technology firm TSI Technology Solutions LLC.

After 22 years of running his own business, Pitt has elected to drop the ServiceWorld name and retire TSI Integrated Services LLC, an entity Pitt established last year with TSI President Robert Bray to serve the Springfield area. Pitt said Nexus Underground, a data center ServiceWorld developed, would retain its name but be managed by TSI.

In the deal, Pitt became a minority owner and partner of the 145-employee TSI, which also operates under the TSI Global Cos. banner. Both parties declined to disclose financial terms of the deal.

Pitt said he would remain in Springfield to manage what is now TSI's Springfield office, 1409 W. Sunshine St., which is currently in the middle of remodeling. Branding, signage and remodeling expenses are estimated to cost \$50,000, Pitt said.

Pitt said he expects the move to help TSI Technology Solutions increase 2014 revenue to \$30 million from a projected \$25 million this year, based on business development opportunities Pitt and Bray have identified.

Joining forces

After meeting about two years ago with both parties interested in potentially working for the owners of a planned equestrian center in Republic, Pitt and Bray began discussing collaborative opportunities. In October, the duo formally established TSI Integrated Services to offer a full range of Internet Protocol-based services to local customers.

"The relationship worked really well, and what we found out was that with the combined companies, about any technology a company could need, we had under one roof," Pitt said. "We had the manpower and the infrastructure, and that resonated well with clients because they didn't have to outsource to a bunch of companies to do things.

"We saw strength in our synergy."

ServiceWorld has specialized in providing networking services, and TSI was well known for its cabling and IT capabilities.

"The systems and technologies these days are all being converted to IP-based and



Doug Pitt is now minority owner in St. Charles-based TSI Technology Solutions.



Robert Bray: Pitt's networking expertise is important to TSI customers.

ride on that network strength that ServiceWorld has,” Bray said.

The combined companies offer fully integrated audio and video services, voice and data security services, fiber-optic cabling, teleconferencing and signage for commercial, municipal and residential customers.

“In the old days, everything was in its own silo. Your A/V system was standalone. Your security system was standalone. Your voice system was standalone. In this day and age, everything is becoming ‘networkable.’ To pile all those systems together on one network requires a company that has a solid understanding of the network requirements to carry all these systems. That’s what Doug and ServiceWorld bring to TSI,” Bray said. “It is a one-stop shop, and I know that is said by quite a few, but it really is nice to have all the technology and expertise under one roof.”

Closing the deal around Aug. 1, Pitt said having familiarity with TSI has eased concerns about losing the ServiceWorld name.

“(TSI) is a known quantity to me. It is a known quantity to our employees, and it is a known quantity to our clients that have utilized both of us,” Pitt said.

Bray said it was important to keep the TSI name because his 26-year-old company has developed a nationwide reputation. Its client list includes the St. Louis Cardinals, New York Mets, Anheuser-Busch In-Bev and the Peabody Opera House in St. Louis.

To Foley and beyond

Killian Construction Co. CEO and owner Bill Killian said his company has worked more than a decade with Pitt and ServiceWorld, and in recent months he has familiarized himself with Bray and TSI.

TSI and Pitt are bringing audio-visual infrastructure to Killian’s \$200 million, 500-acre entertainment district project in Foley, Ala., dubbed Blue Collar Country.

“We are excited about teaming up and working them into our relationship in Foley,” Killian said, noting TSI’s capabilities for cabling, networking and IT solutions for the large project’s complicated audio-visuals.

Among Blue Collar Country’s features are five themed areas, three restaurants, two hotels and a 100,000-square-foot sports and events center. “I think with their association, they will fit hand-in-glove with us to provide these services,” he said.

Pitt said the merger allows TSI Technology the flexibility to take on projects with a national scope, such as the Blue Collar job, to IT solutions for small businesses in Springfield.

“I know who we are in Springfield, in that 97 percent of our business base here is small businesses – 50 employees or less. That’s the market I’ve thrived in myself. That’s the market I know well, and I have every intention of focusing on that market,” Pitt said.

He added that as he becomes occupied with the larger projects, Director of Business Development Dave Sharon would be in place to handle some of Pitt’s Springfield office responsibilities. “We are scaled to work with everyone from the St. Louis Cardinals to a five-user network,” Pitt said.